

C L A I M S

1. A device for protecting a vessel's loading space, the hold (1) of the ship being provided with cargo pressure tanks (12), from excess pressure if a gas leakage should occur in the loading space, characterized in that the vessel is provided with a ventilating duct (8) which extends along the hold (1) and is separated in a gastight manner from the remaining rooms of the ship.
2. A device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the ventilating duct (8) extends essentially parallel to a gastight pipe corridor (6), the pipe corridor (6) enclosing at least a loading and unloading pipe (28).
3. A device in accordance with claim 1 and/or claim 2, characterized in that the hold (1) of the ship is divided into hold sections (2), each hold section (2) being provided with a valve compartment (4) separated in a gastight manner from the remaining rooms of the vessel, the valve compartment (4) enclosing at least one shut-off valve (30, 33) which is arranged to shut off a pipe connection between the loading and unloading pipe (28) and a cargo pressure tank (12).
4. A device in accordance with claim 1, characterized in that the hold (1) communicates with the ventilating duct (8) through at least one automatically opening valve (14, 16).
5. A device in accordance with claim 3, characterized in that the valve compartment (4)

communicates with the ventilating duct (8) through at least one automatically opening valve (20, 22).

6. A device in accordance with claim 2, characterized in that the pipe corridor (6) communicates with the ventilating duct (8) through at least one automatically opening valve (24, 26).
7. A method for protecting the loading space of a vessel, the hold (1) of the vessel being provided with cargo pressure tanks (12), from excess pressure if a gas leakage should occur in the loading spacehold (1), characterized in that at least one valve (14, 16) opens between the hold (1) and a ventilating duct (8) which extends along the hold (1) of the ship and is separated in a gastight manner therefrom.